DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 691 FL 024 788

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TITLE	Beliefs About Foreign Language Learning--A Study of Beliefs of Teachers' and Students' Cross Cultural Settings.
PUB DATE	1997-03-11
NOTE	35p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (31st, Orlando, FL, March 11-15, 1997).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Anxiety; Beliefs; College Faculty; Communication Apprehension; Comparative Analysis; *Cultural Context; Cultural Differences; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; French; German; Higher Education; *Language Attitudes; *Language Teachers; Learning Motivation; Learning Strategies; Second Language Learning; Sex Differences; Spanish; *Student Attitudes; Surveys; *Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	*Chinese People; Taiwan

ABSTRACT

This study investigated: (1) the causes and effects of Chinese students' beliefs about foreign language learning; (2) mismatches between teachers' and students' beliefs; and (3) how teachers' and students' beliefs compare across cultures. Subjects were 23 Chinese and English teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and 224 EFL university students in South Taiwan. Data were drawn from student grades and a questionnaire consisting of scales for motivation for English learning, beliefs about foreign language learning, language learning strategies, and language classroom anxiety. Analysis of results indicates that in language learning, females used more cognitive strategies to manipulate the target language and tended to achieve at a higher level. Good language learners were less anxious, spent more effort, regarded the foreign language as less difficult, and used more language learning strategies. Factors affecting student beliefs include attitudes toward English learning and the use of language learning strategies. Students' beliefs affected their motivation, attitudes, motivational intensity, strategy use, anxiety, and English achievement. Chinese students and teachers shared beliefs about children's superiority, advantage of previous language experience, language difficulty, language aptitude, and need for practice. Differences were found between Chinese and American teachers. Contains 22 references. (MSE)

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ED 411 691

Beliefs about Foreign Language Learning

-- A Study of Beliefs of Teachers and Students Cross Cultural Settings--

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Paper presented at the 31st Annual TESOL Convention
March 11-15, 1997. Orlando, Florida, USA

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Abstract

This study is an attempt (a) to assess Chinese students' beliefs about English learning, (b) to see what the causes and effects of their beliefs are; and (c) to compare Chinese teachers' beliefs with Kern's (1995), as well as (d) to compare the beliefs between Chinese students of English and U.S. students of German, French, and Spanish.

Beliefs about Foreign Language Learning
-- A Study of Beliefs of Teachers and Students Cross Cultural Settings--

Background

Foreign languages, one of the three "substantive" courses in the post-Sputnik curriculum reform movement (1957), was not given as much attention to as that of science and mathematics in the beginning. It was not until 1959, when Gardner and Lambert introduced integrative-instrumental approach to measuring motivation, attention began to be shifted from the study of learners' behavior to the learning process of the language learners. It was this shift that gave definition to the field of second/foreign language learning (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). Since then, insiders and outsiders have become more and more interested in highlighting myriad factors that can impact on successful language learning. Since the 1970s, "Focus on the learner" (Oller & Richard, 1973) and "Good language learners" (Rubin, 1975) have attracted an extraordinary attention to the learners' characteristics. Especially, learners' affective difference "... is now of particular interest to foreign language teachers" (Horwitz, 1990, p.16).

Among those affective variables, motivation and attitude have been widely regarded as to be related to foreign language

success, while anxiety is suggested to play a role in influencing learners' language performance either positively (Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977) or negatively (Gardner, Smythe, Clement, & Gliksman, 1976; Horwitz, 1986). However, comparatively, less research is conducted on beliefs about language learning, let alone on beliefs of students and teachers in different culture backgrounds.

Related Literature

Students of all ages have opinions about materials, instructions, learning situations, teachers, and classmates. Individual's opinion about learning may not be the same, and even the learners themselves sometimes have conflicting beliefs about learning. Students bring those concepts into classroom and are affected by them. From their beliefs, we can understand students' expectation of commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with their language classes (Horwitz, 1988). "What do students think about language learning?" "What are the causes and effects of students' beliefs?" and "What are the mismatches of beliefs between students and teachers, or among students cross cultural settings?" are three major concerns of any research dealing with the investigation of students' beliefs about language learning.

For the purpose of changing its methodological approach

toward a much more communicative one in the University of Toronto's Continuing Studies program, Yorio was invited to conduct a series of survey to examine students' beliefs about classroom techniques. Yorio (1986) reported that students' beliefs are determined by their proficiency level and language background, especially the latter "... most often appears to result in marked differences" (p.682). Another finding dealing with students' conflicting beliefs is that, on one hand, "students indicated a marked preference for courses stressing communicative competence", but on the other hand, "they showed obvious reluctance to abandon very traditional teaching techniques" (p.672).

Other studies, like Horwitz (1988, 1990), Lutz (1990), Kumaravadivelu (1991), Yang (199), Nunan (1993), and Kern (1995) assessed students' and teachers' beliefs or role expectations and claimed that some similarities and contrasts do exist. Among them, Horwitz is the first to systematically identify beliefs about language learning. Her Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) (1988) is a widely adopted instrument to measure learners' opinions about difficulty, aptitude, nature, strategy use, and expectation of language learning. Horwitz (1988) claimed that some students' beliefs are very optimistic and unrealistic, and even conflict with real language learning. For example, some students thought that it will take them less than two years to become fluent in foreign language,

and expect immediate error correctness, while in real classroom situations, the time estimates for fluency is quite different and some kinds of errors are permitted for communication purposes and to prevent beginning learners from frustration. Later, Kern (1995) used BALLI as an instrument to compare teachers' and students' beliefs, and found that there are some mismatches between teachers' and students' beliefs, as well as even between students of different universities (comparing with Horwitz's study). She found many students disagree that it's alright to guess if they don't know a word in that foreign language, and regard the learning of vocabulary, grammar, and translation are the major work of learning a foreign language, but teachers have no consensus about that. Moreover, owing to that target language being not a requird course, Berkeley students are found to be more optimistic and integratively motivated than their Texan counterparts (Kern, 1995).

In addition to Horwitz's (1988) and Kern's (1995) studies, Yang (1992) assessed the relationship between Taiwanese college students' beliefs and their use of learning strategies. She also compared the subjects' beliefs with that of other studies. Results of the study not only support a connection between language learners' beliefs and their use of learning strategies (Wenden, 1987), but also point out some differences existing in beliefs between Chinese students and American students of foreign languages.

Previous studies have indicated how students think about language learning, how those beliefs related to their strategy use (Wenden, 1987; Yang, 1992) and learning anxiety (Horwitz, 1990), as well as how some beliefs are conflicting, and mismatching with those of teachers, or even students of different institutions (Kern, 1995), and different culture settings (Yang, 1992). No matter what participants of those studies are, it is obvious that students have some misconceptions toward language learning itself. And some belief mismatches do exist between students and teachers, or even among students in different institutions. However, there exists no study comparing beliefs of teachers in different culture settings, and their impact on their students' beliefs.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this present study is three fold: (1) to investigate the causes and effects of students' beliefs about foreign language learning, (2) to find out mismatches between teachers' and students' beliefs, and (3) to compare the beliefs of teachers and students cross cultural settings.

Subjects

A total of 23 English teachers were involved in the study. In addition, 224 EFL college students in South Taiwan served as subjects, including 109 males and 15 females. They had at least six years' formal English learning experience. A questionnaire dealing with subjects' background, reasons for learning English, attitude, motivational intensity, beliefs, strategy use, and anxiety was administered.

Research Instrument

The subjects' English grades for mid-term and final exams were used as their English achievement scores. In addition, a questionnaire was adopted as the research instrument, which contains four parts: Motivation/Attitude Inventory for English Learning (MAIEL) (Cheng, 1995), Beliefs about Foreign Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) (Horwitz, 1988), Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1989, version 7.0), and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). For easy to read, items of the questionnaire were translated into Chinese. In total, there were 20 items for students' background, 16 for orientation, 20 for attitude, 35 for beliefs (34 were adopted from Horwitz, and one from Yang), 50 for strategy, and 33 for anxiety as well. In anticipation of a

more effective analysis of the data, some categorized factors were used instead of individual items. For instance, Motivation was categorized as instrumental orientation (items 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15) and integrative orientation (items 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16); Attitude was divided into (1) importance of English (items 1, 2, 3), (2) desire to learn English (items 4, 5, 11), (3) association with English (items 7, 8, 9, 10, 13), (4) cultural aspects (items 6, 12, 14, 15), (5) mechanics of learning (items 16, 17, 18, 19, 20); Motivational intensity, high (M>2.5), medium (M>1.5, and M< 2.5), low (M<1.5); Beliefs, including (1) the difficulty of language learning (items 3, 4, 5, 15, 25, 34), (2) foreign language aptitude (items 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 16, 19, 30, 33), (3) the nature of language learning (items 8, 12, 17, 23, 27, 28, 35), (4) learning and communication strategies (items 7, 9, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22, 26), (5) motivation and expectations (items 20, 24, 29, 31, 32); Strategy, including (1) memory strategy (items 1 to 9), (2) cognitive strategy (items 10 to 23), (3) compensation strategy (items 24 to 29), (4) metacognitive strategy (items 30 to 38), (5) affective strategy (items 39 to 44), and (6) social strategy (items 45 to 50).

Along with descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation, and frequencies, Tukey Test, and Multiple Regression Analysis were computed by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science, version 5.0).

Findings and Discussion

The reliability of the questionnaire was .80, .81. ,85. .61, .97, and .84 for motivation, attitude, motivational intensity, beliefs, strategy, and anxiety, respectively. Students were found to be motivated to learn English more instumentally (96.4%), and 81% of them self-reported that they learn that language in order to pass exams. About 75% of the students belonged to the group with medium level of motivational intensity. They had less experiences for English listening and speaking, and 48% pointed out that they had more difficulties in the two skills than in reading and writing. Many students (76%) expected to be taught by native speakers of English, and 90% hoped to have more practical teaching materials. For them, the most frequently used method for practicing their listening and pronunciation was to sing English songs.

Other findings are described in response to (a) differences of variables between males and females, (b) between good and poor language learners; (c) factors affecting students' language achievement, (d) factors influencing students' beliefs; (e) impacts of students' beliefs; (f) comparison of teachers' and students' beliefs; (g) comparison of beliefs between Chinese students of English and American students of foreign languages, as well as (h) comparison of beliefs between Chinese teachers and American teachers. They are as follows:

A. Differences of Variables between Males and Females

It was found that between males and females, a significant difference only exists in students' English achievement ($p<.01$), and the use of cognitive strategies as well ($p<.05$). Females use more cognitive strategies, such as reasoning deductively, using contrastive analysis, and strengthening grammatical accuracy (Oxford, 1990) and tend to have better English achievement than males.

B. Differences of Variables between Good and Poor Language Learners

Except for motivation, findings show that there is a significant difference in other variables between good and poor language learners (Top 10% and bottom 10% of English achievement) (see Table 1). Good language learners hold more favorable attitudes, higher motivational intensity, positive belief, and use more strategies, as well as become less anxious when learning English. In particular, females tend to be better language learners, and those high achievers tend to regard English as less difficu , have less anxiety, spend more effort, like to associate with English, and use more strategies than low achievers.

Table 1

Differences between Good and Poor Language Learners (N=224)

	Moti	Attit (A1,2,3, 5)	Inten	Belief (B1)	Strat (S1,2,3,4,5, 6)	Anx	Sex
F	-	* * ** *	*	**	* * * * ** *	**	**

* p<.05 ** P<.01

Note.
Belief B1=Difficulty of the language
Attit A1=Importance of English A3=Association with English
A2=Desire to Learn English A5=Mechanics of Learning
Strat S1=Memory Strategy S4=Metacognitive Strategy
S2=Cognitive Strategy S5=Affective Strategy
S3=Compensation Strategy S6=Social Strategy

C. Factors Affecting Students' English Achievement (N=224)

By using Multiple Regression, it was found that factors affecting students' English achievement are attitude (Factor 3), motivational intensity, beliefs (Belief 1), strategy, anxiety, and gender (see Table 2). It is consistent that females seem to have better language achievement than males. And students, regarding English as less difficult, being less anxious, spending more effort, using more learning strategies, and holding more positive attitude toward association with English are likely to have better English achievement, too.

Table 2

Factors Affecting Students' English Achievement (N=224)

	Moti	Attit (A3)	Inten	Belief (B1)	Strat	Anx	Sex
T	-	2.23	5.08	3.82	5.67	-4.12	3.85
Sig of T	-	.03	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00

Note.
Moti= Motivation Strat= Strategy use Anx= anxiety
Attit (A3)= Attitude Factor 3: Association with English
Inten= Motivational intensity
Belief (B1)= Belief Factor 1: Difficulty of the language

D. Factors Affecting Students' Beliefs

It was found that factors affecting students' beliefs about foreign language learning are attitudes and strategy use (see Table 3). By analyzing the categorized factors of each variable, it is shown that attitude 1 (the importance of English) has great impacts on all categorized factors of beliefs, especially on Belief 5 (Motivation and Expectation). It seems that students hold favorable attitudes toward English learning (expecially recognizing the importance of English), and use more language learning strategies tend to have more positive beliefs about English learning.

Table 3.

Factors Affecting Students' Beliefs about English Learning

	Moti	Attit	Inten	Strat	Anxie	Eng-achie	Sex
T	-	6.084	-	5.517	-	-	-
Sig of T	-	.0000	-	.0000	-	-	-

Note.
"-" means the Sig of T doesn't reach .05 level.
Moti= Motivation Attit= Attitude
Inten= Motivational intensity Strat= Strategy use
Anxie= Anxiety Eng-achie= English achievement

E. Impacts of Students' Beliefs on Foreign Language Learning

Students' beliefs about foreign language learning also influence other variables related to language learning. Findings show that other variables influenced by students' beliefs are motivation, attitude, motivational intensity, strategy, anxiety, and English achievement. Among them, attitude is the variable greatly influenced by beliefs, while anxiety is negatively related to beliefs (T=-3.925) (see Table 4). In other words, students with positive beliefs about foreign language learning tend to have stronger motivation, hold favorable attitude and higher motivational intensity, use more strategy, are less anxiety, and have better language achievement.

Table 4

Factors Influenced by Students' Beliefs (N=224)

	Moti	Attit	Inten	Strat	Anxie	Eng-achie
T	7.882	11.165	5.783	7.038	-3.925	2.930
Sig of T	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0001	.0038

When categorized factors of beliefs are concerned, it is found that Belief1 has impacts on Attitude3, Intensity, Strategies 1-6, Anxiety and English achievement; Belief2 influences Motivation2, Attitude3-5, and Strategy2-4; Belief3 affects Attitude1; Belief4 influences Attitudes2, 5, and Strategy3; while Belief5 is very influential on other factors, with an exception of Strategy1, Anxiety and English achievement (see Table 5). It seems that students with positive beliefs about the language difficulty (Belief1) tend to have more favorable attitude toward association with that language, use more strategies, are less anxious, and have better language achievement; students who believe language aptitude (Belief2) tend to be motivated more integratively, hold more favorable attitudes toward association with that language, cultural aspects, mechanics of learning, and use more strategies of cognitive, compensation, and metacognitive; those who believe the nature of that language (Belief3) have more positive attitude toward the importance of that language; furthermore, students who believe the use of learning and communication strategies (belief4) tend to have more

positive attitudes toward desire to learn that language, mechanics of learning, and use more compensation strategies; whereas students with positive beliefs about motivation and expectations (Belief5) are those who are motivated both instrumentally and integratively, hold favorable attitudes toward language learning, have higher motivational intensity, and use more language learning strategies (with an exception of memory strategy). Undoubtedly, students' beliefs about language learning do play an important role in influencing their motivation, attitude, motivational intensity, strategy use, anxiety and language achievement.

Table 5

Categorized Factors of Beliefs Affecting Other Variables

		Belief1	Belief2	Belief3	Belief4	Belief5
Motivation	M1	-	-	-	-	**
	M2	-	**	-	-	**
Attitude	A1	-	-	*	-	**
	A2	-	-	-	**	*
	A3	*	**	-	-	**
	A4	-	*	-	-	**
	A5	-	**	-	*	**
Intensity		**	-	-	-	**
Strategy	S1	**	-	-	-	-
	S2	**	**	-	-	**
	S3	**	**	-	*	*
	S4	**	**	-	-	*
	S5	**	-	-	-	**
	S6	**	-	-	-	**
Anxiety		**	-	-	-	-
Eng-Achie		**	-	-	-	-

* p<.05 ** p<.01

Note.
Belief1 = difficulty of language learning
Belief2 = language aptitude
Belief3 = nature of language learning
Belief4 = learning and communication stratgegies
Belief5 = motivation and expectation
Motivation M1=Instrumental Orientation
M2=Integrative Orientation
Attitude A1=Importance of English A4=Cultural Aspects
A2=Desire to Learn English A5=Mechanics of Learning
A3=Association with English
Strategy S1=Memory Strategy S4=Metacognitive Strategy
S2=Cognitive Strategy S5=Affective Strategy
S3=Compensation Strategy S6=Social Strategy

F. Comparison of Beliefs of Chinese Students of English and American Students of German, French, and Spanish

In comparing the beliefs of Chinese students of English and American students of foreign languages, it is found that many of the two groups of students think the language they are learning is easy or moderately difficult, they can learn it very well. Many of them endorse that reading and writing seem to be easier, and ages, previous language learning experience are influential; they recognize the necessity of culture exposure and language fluency. But Chinese students, having more previous linguistic background, tend to be more self-confident and have female superiority. They use more compensation strategies, strongly memorize vocabulary and grammar for accuracy and proficiency, overconcern with immediate error correction, stress the importance of speaking with "an excellent accent", enjoy speaking with native speakers, hold positive attitude toward learning a foreign language, and are motivated more instrumentally. On the other hand, many American students of foreign languages seem to suffer more from speaking-anxiety; use less learning and communication strategies; don't think that they are good at learning foreign languages; value translation more, especially for students of German and Spanish; but value less speaking with an excellent accent and the necessity of immediate error correction; and tend to be motivated to learn a foreign language more integratively.

G. Comparison of Chinese teachers' and students' beliefs about foreign language learning

Chinese students seem to be more optimistic in language learning than their teachers. In general, they regard English as a less difficult language (item 4), and many students (34%) think that it will take less than two years to speak English well (item 15), while the majority of their teachers (82%) expect the time estimates for language fluency to be 3-5 years. Moreover, by using Tukey Test, it is found that between teachers and students, there are significant differences existing in some beliefs. For example, more students positively believe that everyone can learn a foreign language (item 33) ($p<.01$), and they feel timid speak English with other people (item 21) ($p<.05$). They regard grammar and translation to be the most important parts of learning English (items 21, 28) ($p<.05$, $p<.01$, respectively). On the other hand, more teachers believe that some people have a special ability for learning a foreign language (item 2) ($p<.05$), and believe that those people who speak more than one language is very intelligent (item 30) ($p<.05$). They regard English learning is more difficult than their students do (item 4) ($p<.05$), and believe that women are better language learners (item 19) ($p<.05$).

Obviously, mismatches beteen teachers' and students' beliefs do exist, especially on the beliefs about gender, the aptitude and the nature of foreign language learning. In

general, teachers believe that language learning deals more with gender, aptitude, and intelligence, but students seem to be more optimistic, and believe that foreign language learning is a matter of grammar and translation.

H. Comparison of Chinese teachers' and American teachers' beliefs about foreign language learning

Comparatively, Chinese teachers seem to hold more positive beliefs about language aptitude (items 2, 30). They are more self-confident in foreign language learning (items 5, 6), predict accuracy and excellent pronunciation (items 9,7). They value more the necessity of learning vocabulary, grammar, translation (items 17, 23, 28), culture exposure (item 12), and immediate error correction (item 22). In addition, more Chinese teachers recognize the importance of learning English (item 20); are more instrumentally motivated (item 29); and believe that females are better language learners than males (item 19). On the other hand, more American teachers believe that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language (item 33). No American teacher disagrees that it is OK to guess if learners don't know a word in that language (item 14), while 9% of Chinese teachers disagree on that. Moreover, more American teachers (83%) strongly disagree that translation is the most important part of learning a foreign language (item 28), or learners shouldn't say anything in that target language until they can say it correctly (item

9). But more American teachers feel timid when speaking that target language with other people (item 21). It is obvious that American teachers tend to focus more on learning process while Chinese teachers pay more attention to learners' outcome. In particular, more American teachers believe that everyone is teachable. To encourage learners to participate in language learning activities, American teachers expect less learners' accuracy and excellent pronunciation, encourage learners to think and to guess during learning process. On the contrary, Chinese teachers tend to care more about the learning products, recognize the importance of learning vocabulary, grammar and translation, highly predict learning fluency and accuracy, and expect to provide immediate error correction.

In short, females tend to have better language achievement, and good language learners perform better in attitude, motivational intensity, beliefs, strategy use, and anxiety. Beliefs are found to be strongly related to attitude, and some differences of beliefs do exist between teachers and students, as well as between teachers or students cross cultural settings.

Summary

By reviewing Horwitz's (1988), Yang's (1992), and Kern's (1995) studies on beliefs about foreign language learning,

the present study attempted to assess the causes and effects of Chinese students' beliefs about English learning, as well as the mismatches between teachers' and students' beliefs. In addition, the comparison of beliefs between teachers and students of foreign languages cross cultural settings were addministered.

A total of 224 EFL college students and 23 English teachers are are involved in the case study. The research instrument is a questionnaire. The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire accompanied with findings of Horwitz's (1988), and Kern's (1995) was shown in Appendix A. The reliability of each part is .80, .81,.85, .61, .97, and .84 for motivation, attitude, motivational intensity, beliefs, strategy, and anxiety, respectively. The study's findings are as following;

(1) In language learning, females use more cognitive strategies to manipulate or transform that target language, and tend to have better language achievement than males.

(2) Good language learners are less anxious, spend more effort, regard that foreign language as less difficult, hold more positive attitudes, and use more language learning strategies.

(3) Factors affecting students' beliefs are attitudes toward

English learning (especially Factor 1: The importance of English), and the use of language learning strategies. Students holding favorable attitudes and using more strategies tend to have more positive beliefs about language learning.

(4) Students' beliefs have impacts on their motivation, attitudes, motivational intensity, strategy use, anxiety, and English achievement. In general, students with positive beliefs about language learning are strongly motivated; hold favorable attitudes, higher motivational intensity; use more learning strategies; are less anxious; and have better language achievement. In particular, students recognize the difficulty of the language they are studying (Belief 1) tend to spend more effort, and have better language achievement, while students with stronger motivation and higher expectations (Belief 5) are motivated both instumentally and integratively, hold positive attitudes, study harder, and use many learning strategies (but with an exception of memory strategy).

(5) Both Chinese teachers and students share in common the beliefs about children superiority, the advantage of previous language experience, the difficulty degree of that target language, language aptitude, individual's ability to learn a foreign language, and the necessity of lots of practice. However, in spite of these, there are some mismatches existing in their views of language learning (learning

vocabulary, grammar, translation), immediate error correction, whole language, speaking with an excellent accent, and female superiority. Many students regard language learning as mainly a matter of memorization of vocabulary, grammar, or translation; expect accurcy with an excellent pronunciation, overconcern teacher's error correctness, predict accuracy and proficiency.

(6) Chinese students are more optimistic in viewing the time estimates for language fluency, and use more compensation strategies. While comparing with American students of foreign languages, Chinese students, with more linguistic background, have stronger motivation, higher expectation, more positive attitudes toward the target language and culture. Greatly influenced by traditional grammar translation instruction and the requirements of entrance examination, Chinese students, relatively, are strong in linguistic ability but weak in communication competence. They expect teachers' error correctness and hope speaking with an excellent accent. They use lots of memory and compensation strategies (guessing intelligently); and are motivated more instrumentally (96.4%). On the contrary, American students, being foreign language beginners, appear "less capable of dealing with more realistic or more functional tasks" (Yorio, 1986, p.682), tend to suffer more from speaking anxiety, are less optimistic about their

accomplishment, use less learning and communication strategies, emphasize more the learning of translation, and are motivated to learn a foreign language more integratively,

(7) comparatively, American teachers focus more on learning process, appreciate learners' participation, expect less learners' accuracy or excellent pronunciation, and encourage learners to think and solve problems on their own. Chinese teachers, on the other hand, pay more attention to learning performance. They believe the importance of learning vocabulary, grammar and translation, predict learning accuracy and fluency, and expect to provide immediate error correction.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Students' beliefs about foreign language learning is found to play an important role in influencing their motivation, attitude, motivational intensity, strategy use, anxiety and language achievement. But, with little or limited knowledge about that target language, students may have some misconceptions which seem to be unrealistic, conflicting, or mismatching with teachers' beliefs or the principles of classroom instruction. All will lead to frustration or disappointment, bring about unsatisfactory performance, or even end their language study.

It is regarded that to help students develop realistic beliefs about foreign language learning, teachers can start from helping students develop positive attitude by showing them what kind of beliefs they have are not realistic, or mismatch with principles of classroom instruction. In addition, teachers can train them to use strategies that good language learners frequently use, or recommend them some strategies which match their personality or learning styles.

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Percentage of Teachers and Students Selecting that Alternative of The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory

(SD=strongly disagree, D=disagree, N=no comment, A= Agree, SA= Strongly agree)

CE=Chinese students of English (Cheng, 1996, N=224).
AG=American students of German (Horwitz, 1988, N=80).
AF=American students of French (Horwitz, 1988, N=63).
AS=American students of Spanish (Horwitz, 1988, N=98).
AT=American teachers of French (Kern, 1995, N=15).
CT=Chinese teachers of English (Cheng, 1996, N=23).

items		SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	CE:	1	5	10	47	37	4.1	0.9
	AG:	1	3	8	34	54		
	AF:	1	4	11	39	44		
	AS:	1	12	10	40	37		
	AT:	0	8	25	50	17		
	CT:	0	0	7	43	50	4.1	1.1
2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	CE:	2	6	10	61	21	3.9	0.9
	AG:	4	14	28	38	14		
	AF:	3	19	29	33	13		
	AS:	10	15	24	39	12		
	AT:	8	0	33	42	17		
	CT:	0	0	0	64	36	4.3	0.8
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	CE:	3	13	22	50	12	3.5	1.0
	AG:	0	0	11	50	38		
	AF:	0	3	10	58	28		
	AS:	3	3	8	45	41		
	AT:	0	8	25	50	17		
	CT:	0	14	29	36	21	3.6	1.0
4. English is (1)a very difficult language, (2)a difficult language, (3) a language of medium difficulty, (4) an easy language, (5) a very easy language.	CE:	2	9	41	43	5	3.4	0.8
	AG:	0	5	58	33	4		
	AF:	0	5	54	38	1		
	AS:	5	14	59	20	1		
	AT:	0	8	67	25	0		
	CT:	0	0	57	36	7	3.5	0.7
5. I believe that I will learn to speak English very well.	CE:	1	4	10	61	24	4.0	0.7
	AG:	0	11	34	41	13		
	AF:	1	9	36	41	13		
	AS:	2	19	27	37	15		
	AT:	1	9	36	41	13		
	CT:	0	0	14	64	22	4.0	0.6

(continued)

items		SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
* 6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	CE:	3	11	53	27	6	3.2	0.9
	AG:	11	33	48	4	0		
	AF:	9	23	60	6	0		
	AS:	10	21	63	3	1		
	AT:	0	25	67	8	0		
	CT:	0	36	43	21	0	2.8	0.8
7. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	CE:	1	1	1	44	53	4.4	0.6
	AG:	1	31	26	30	10		
	AF:	3	14	30	37	15		
	AS:	1	12	29	44	14		
	AT:	17	33	33	17	0		
	CT:	0	0	0	43	57	4.2	0.5
8. It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	CE:	5	14	34	39	8	3.2	1.0
	AG:	3	23	38	33	4		
	AF:	5	18	35	35	8		
	AS:	4	19	32	37	8		
	AT:	0	17	58	17	8		
	CT:	7	14	7	65	7	3.6	0.8
9. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	CE:	57	37	4	1	1	1.5	0.7
	AG:	29	54	11	5	0		
	AF:	27	46	14	9	3		
	AS:	25	52	11	10	2		
	AT:	50	50	0	0	0		
	CT:	50	50	0	0	0	1.5	0.5
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	CE:	2	12	32	40	14	3.5	1.0
	AG:	1	13	25	50	10		
	AF:	3	11	11	48	27		
	AS:	3	11	16	47	22		
	AT:	8	0	17	42	33		
	CT:	7	7	14	50	22	3.4	1.2
11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	CE:	22	44	24	8	2	2.2	1.0
	AG:	23	35	36	1	3		
	AF:	23	34	35	4	1		
	AS:	27	31	38	4	1		
	AT:	25	50	25	0	0		
	CT:	14	64	14	8	0	2.0	0.8
12. It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.	CE:	1	3	11	41	44	4.2	0.8
	AG:	0	5	18	43	34		
	AF:	3	6	24	41	25		
	AS:	0	14	16	30	40		
	AT:	0	17	42	33	8		
	CT:	7	0	0	64	29	4.1	1.1

(continued)

	items		SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
13.	I enjoy practicing English with the Americans I meet.	CE:	1	7	26	44	22	3.7	0.9
		AG:	0	14	38	42	6		
		AF:	2	27	36	27	5		
		AS:	5	37	30	24	5		
		AT:	-	-	-	-	-		
		CT:	0	7	14	72	7	4.0	0.8
14.	It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.	CE:	2	3	8	66	21	4.0	0.8
		AG:	5	15	37	33	10		
		AF:	8	19	33	33	5		
		AS:	2	19	16	53	9		
		AT:	0	0	25	42	33		
		CT:	0	7	14	50	29	3.9	0.8
15.	If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to speak the language very well? (a) 1-2 years, (b) 3-5 years, (c) 6-10 years, (d) over 10 years, (e) he/she can never learn a language well.	CE:	34	41	10	6	9	2.1	1.2
		AG:	8	9	35	35	8		
		AF:	12	7	34	38	6		
		AS:	8	10	35	37	5		
		AT:	25	8	33	33	0		
		CT:	21	72	7	0	0	1.9	0.4
*	16. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	CE:	5	20	38	26	11	3.2	1.0
		AG:	4	15	39	30	11		
		AF:	3	19	44	25	8		
		AS:	6	24	39	27	5		
		AT:	3	19	44	25	8		
		CT:	0	43	43	14	0	2.7	0.8
**	17. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.	CE:	1	7	15	56	21	3.9	0.8
		AG:	6	39	28	20	5		
		AF:	3	46	13	29	10		
		AS:	2	47	12	33	6		
		AT:	25	67	8	0	0		
		CT:	0	29	0	57	14	3.3	0.8
18.	It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	CE:	1	0	3	49	47	4.2	0.6
		AG:	0	0	1	30	68		
		AF:	1	0	0	25	73		
		AS:	0	1	1	41	57		
		AT:	0	0	0	58	42		
		CT:	0	0	0	64	36	4.4	0.5
*	19. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	CE:	16	28	33	20	3	2.6	1.1
		AG:	19	30	44	4	1		
		AF:	19	31	39	8	1		
		AS:	30	30	36	4	1		
		AT:	42	42	17	0	0		
		CT:	0	7	0	86	7	3.2	1.0

(continued)

	items		SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
20.	People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	CE:	2	1	6	62	29	4.1	0.7
		AG:	31	33	24	6	1		
		AF:	18	28	27	22	3		
		AS:	19	35	22	22	1		
		AT:	27	65	8	0	0		
		CT:	0	7	0	86	7	3.9	0.7
21.	I feel timid speaking English with other people.	CE:	11	26	27	31	5	2.9	1.1
		AG:	6	21	28	34	10		
		AF:	3	18	17	45	14		
		AS:	7	25	17	36	15		
		AT:	3	18	17	45	14		
		CT:	14	50	14	22	0	2.5	1.0
** 22.	If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English without correction, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly (to correct errors) later on.	CE:	1	6	9	59	25	4.0	0.8
		AG:	13	20	19	30	18		
		AF:	7	17	17	38	19		
		AS:	6	21	17	34	21		
		AT:	8	42	25	25	0		
		CT:	0	22	14	50	14	3.4	1.0
** 23.	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.	CE:	4	15	32	41	8	3.3	1.0
		AG:	10	30	33	20	5		
		AF:	5	36	32	21	4		
		AS:	2	27	36	29	7		
		AT:	25	58	17	0	0		
		CT:	7	36	21	36	0	2.6	0.9
24.	I would like to learn English so that I can get to know Americans better.	CE:	6	20	40	29	5	3.0	1.0
		AG:	3	5	49	38	4		
		AF:	5	13	33	38	10		
		AS:	3	17	34	32	14		
		AT:	5	13	33	38	10		
		CT:	0	43	14	36	7	3.3	1.1
* 25.	It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	CE:	4	17	32	39	8	3.2	1.0
		AG:	16	44	25	10	3		
		AF:	13	51	6	24	6		
		AS:	14	49	9	22	5		
		AT:	25	58	17	0	0		
		CT:	7	50	7	36	0	2.6	1.1
26.	It is important to practice with cassettes or tapes.	CE:	1	2	17	60	20	3.9	0.7
		AG:	0	1	40	47	11		
		AF:	2	3	9	45	39		
		AS:	2	10	17	47	24		
		AT:	0	8	8	84	0		
		CT:	0	7	7	86	0	3.8	0.6

(continued)

	items		SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
27.	Learning a foreign language is different from learning other academic subjects.	CE:	1	7	22	54	16	3.7	0.9
		AG:	1	9	11	60	16		
		AF:	3	8	7	42	37		
		AS:	0	8	6	50	36		
		AT:	0	8	33	42	17		
		CT:	0	14	29	57	0	3.5	0.8
** 28.	The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language.	CE:	10	32	30	23	5	2.8	1.1
		AG:	1	2	6	27	43		
		AF:	17	48	17	13	2		
		AS:	1	12	10	39	36		
		AT:	83	17	0	0	0		
		CT:	14	72	14	0	0	2.0	0.5
29.	If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	CE:	1	4	16	58	21	3.9	0.8
		AG:	15	29	43	9	3		
		AF:	10	21	44	19	3		
		AS:	9	30	34	17	10		
		AT:	8	0	84	8	0		
		CT:	0	7	43	43	7	3.7	0.8
* 30.	People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	CE:	7	22	45	22	4	2.0	0.9
		AG:	6	18	50	18	4		
		AF:	8	24	41	25	2		
		AS:	7	22	41	26	4		
		AT:	8	42	50	0	0		
		CT:	0	7	43	50	0	3.3	0.5
31.	I want to learn to speak English well. (If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.)	CE:	1	0	2	41	56	4.4	0.7
		AG:	3	23	34	28	11		
		AF:	3	15	31	33	16		
		AS:	4	10	20	41	25		
		AT:	3	15	31	33	16		
		CT:	0	0	0	50	50	4.5	0.5
32.	I would like to have American friends. (The language I am trying to learn is structured in the same way as English.)	CE:	1	3	25	43	28	3.9	0.9
		AG:	-	-	-	-	-		
		AF:	-	-	-	-	-		
		AS:	-	-	-	-	-		
		AT:	-	-	-	-	-		
		CT:	0	7	36	57	0	3.6	0.7
** 33.	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	CE:	0	5	10	55	30	4.0	0.8
		AG:	3	11	13	48	24		
		AF:	2	7	17	48	25		
		AS:	3	8	5	57	26		
		AT:	0	0	0	75	25		
		CT:	7	22	7	50	14	3.4	0.9

(continued)

	items		SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
**	34. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	CE:	4	15	21	44	16	3.5	1.1
		AG:	1	24	33	34	5		
		AF:	2	11	16	49	22		
		AS:	2	13	21	45	18		
		AT:	0	17	33	42	8		
		CT:	0	50	7	36	7	2.7	1.0
	35. Language learning involves a lot of memorization.	CE:	1	2	6	46	45	4.3	0.7
		AG:	-	-	-	-	-		
		AF:	-	-	-	-	-		
		AS:	-	-	-	-	-		
		AT:	-	-	-	-	-		
		CT:	0	0	7	86	7	4.0	0.5

Item 15. Its original statement in Horwitz' (1988) is:
If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long will it take him/her to speak the language very well?
(1) less than one year, (2) 1-2 years, (3) 3-5 years, (4) 5-10 years, (5) You can never learn a language well.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$
It means that there is a significant difference in that item between Chinese teachers and Chinese students.